

Data and Criminal Justice Information Systems Committee Report – March 18, 2008

Accomplishments: In monthly meetings, the Committee responds to research requests, evaluates preliminary results of studies approved by the CJC, and identifies policy and logistical issues that require resolution in order to expedite data-based research.

Examples of research requests include a CJC member's inquiry into dismissal rates in domestic violence cases and the CJC Reentry Committee's request for data on child support enforcement cases. The Committee also evaluated preliminary results of the Vera jail population study and the OJPC case processing study. Vera is completing the comparative analysis of 2002 and 2006 data. Though the Committee reviewed the initial data, it has not had an opportunity to review the full comparative narrative analysis.

Committee members gave significant feedback on both studies, and advanced the shared understanding of the County's data systems and their functions. The Committee seeks to ensure that the best available data sources are accessed and that that data is accurately interpreted. Through this work, the Committee accomplishes its near-term goals of identifying criminal justice data sources and barriers for data sharing or collection, as well as its mission of facilitating research to support cost-effective, evidence-based criminal justice policies.

Work Currently Pending: After input from the Committee, the OJPC case processing study obtained additional data, reconstructed the data tables, and is undertaking fresh data analysis. The OJPC study examines the flow of cases through the criminal justice system to identify any factors that affect case outcomes at key decision points. The study focuses on aggregate patterns and will not identify any individual case or system participant.

The Committee identified the need for protocols to ensure proper handling of research requests. Issues to be addressed include data ownership and record retention; public records and confidentiality concerns; and availability of resources for data collection and assessment. Upcoming meetings will focus on relevant legal and administrative requirements and the drafting of a proposed protocol and/or model memorandum of understanding to address these matters.

Action Items for 2008: While continuing to facilitate approved research requests and accomplish its near-term goals, the Committee will address the long-term goals of examining other criminal justice information systems around the country and exploring the construction of a jail population projection model.